SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

LANSING, MICHIGAN

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CAUCUS LAUNCHES OUTREACH EFFORT TO HELP URBAN CENTERS FOSTER COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

Emerson: 'It's about providing passionate people with knowledge and support'

LANSING – The Senate Democratic Caucus today announced a new coalition-building outreach program to help increase communication and participation in local and state issues throughout Michigan's metropolitan neighborhoods.

The U.R.B.A.N. (United Relationships and Better Advocacy in Neighborhoods) Outreach Initiative is building an information and resource network to help people living in Michigan's urban centers become more active in and knowledgeable about political issues that directly affect their lives.

"The U.R.B.A.N. Outreach Initiative is about providing passionate people with the knowledge and support necessary to help them make a difference in their communities." Senate Democratic Leader Bob Emerson (D-Flint) said. "In light of the current economic climate, it is critical that we all share information and work together to maximize existing resources. If people want to help their neighborhoods, but don't know where to begin, this program will outline some options and provide a guiding hand."

The caucus outreach program is currently holding meetings with neighborhood activists and community, business, and religious leaders across the state to identify local concerns within each city. Initial meetings have already occurred in Saginaw, Grand Rapids, Benton Harbor, Battle Creek, Flint, Kalamazoo, and Pontiac with additional meetings scheduled in Southfield and Detroit.

In recent meetings, the top concerns listed by community groups included:

- employment,
- housing,
- education,
- health,
- predatory lending, and
- racial profiling.

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"This new resource will help citizens achieve great things for their local neighborhoods by bringing their voices and talents together on the same page," Emerson also said.

For more information on the U.R.B.A.N. Outreach initiative or to schedule a local meeting, please call Tonja Carey at 517.373.0142 or email her at tcarey@senate.michigan.gov.

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